



A note from the desk of...

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SUBJECT: Policing the Rainbow: LGBTQ Experiences, Attitudes, and Perceptions of Law Enforcement Proposal Summary

Chief,

At the LAPD and LGBTQ+ mixer on June 15, 2022, Lieutenant Karen Leong of Audit Division introduced me to Professor Valerie Jenness, professor of Criminology, Law and Society at the University of California Irvine. Professor Jenness also consulted with members of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Group on the most recent LGBTQ+ policy that Commander Flores recently presented to the Board of Police Commissioners.

After the mixer Professor Jenness followed up about a study she is now engaged in -- policing the rainbow. She hopes to make the Los Angeles Police Department one of three large city police departments that is part of an in-depth study (the Chicago Police Department would be another department studied with the third department still undecided). Attached, and summarized below, is the study that NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with the University of California, Irvine submitted to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) for research on "tactics and strategies that strengthen police-community relationships."

In looking over the proposal, both Commander Flores and I believe this could be a valuable study. We believe that the Department would be highlighted as a leader in many ways and that the study would also provide meaningful guidance to the Department about things it may wish to consider.

Below is a summary of the study. With your concurrence, I would like to continue discussing this with Professor Jenness. I would also like to let Mr. Tefank know that we are engaging in discussions with Professor Jenness to continually have the community examine the Department in order to have the Department better serve the community.

Summary of the attachment

Goals of the Study:

- The primary goal is to develop and field the first ever representative survey on LGBTQ people's experiences with, attitudes toward, and perceptions of law enforcement that uses a national probability sample and a matched sample of non-LGBTQ respondents.
- The second goal is to select respondents from the larger survey for follow-up in-depth qualitative interviews to better understand LGBTQ experiences with, perceptions and attitudes towards law enforcement.
- The third goal is to disseminate this work through academic publications, the media, develop best practices in police interacting with LGBTQ people, and develop a project website to publicly disseminate the data and allow user to complete our survey.
- The final goal would be to develop training that can be used by law enforcement agencies and personnel.

Need for Current Survey:

Many of the same factors that foment negatives attitudes and perceptions of police and reluctance to engage with law enforcement in other disadvantaged communities appear to be at work within the LGBTQ community.

Research supports the following trends:

- Disadvantaged groups experience victimizations at higher rates than those in more structurally advantaged groups and may therefore disproportionately benefit from greater police protection.
- Research paints a clear picture that sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) are victimized at higher rates than the general populations, report crime victimization at lower rates, and have disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system.

The following are questions the proposal will address:

- What is happening in encounters between law enforcement and SGMs?
- How do SGMs perceive law enforcement, and what attitudes toward law enforcement do they have?
- Do these experiences, perceptions and attitudes contribute to a willingness to report crime and cooperate with law enforcement on enforcing the law?

Past surveys have had limitations to include not having an adequate sample size of LGBTQ people, or they failed to ask about people's attitudes toward police, only reporting decisions.

A prior survey of sample LGBTQ communities in California and New Jersey that was conducted by the Vera Institute and Dr. Val Jenness showed greater levels of legal cynicism among LGBTQ respondents than non-LGBTQ respondents. However, it did not give a complete picture of why and how such perceptions are cultivated.

Projected Completion:

The research project will be completed by December 2023.